

# EMPOWERMENT SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNT (ESA) PROGRAM

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New Applicants (2016-2017 SY)  
Information Session

# What is an Empowerment Scholarship?

- An account established to provide an education outside of the public or charter schools for qualified students.
  - Not supplemental
- Parents are given the freedom to choose how and where they want to educate their children.
- A parent must follow all state law and ADE's policies established for ESA.
- Taxpayers dollars that would go to your school districts are now allocated to you (applicant parent or legal guardian).



# Who is eligible for an ESA?

- Students with a disability (identified by an Arizona public school in a current IEP, MET or 504 plan).
- Students who were wards of the court and were adopted.
- Students who are wards of the court and the plan is to adopt.
- Students whose parent or guardian is an active duty military member (Armed Forces)



# Who is eligible for an ESA

- Student whose parent was killed while serving active duty in the Armed Forces
- Students that attended a D or F school the year prior to applying
- Siblings of students currently on the program
- Students who reside within the boundaries of an Indian reservation



# What else to qualify?

- Student and applicant parent must be residing in Arizona.

## **AND**

- Student must have attended an Arizona public or charter school for the first 100 days the school year prior to applying
- **OR** received a School Tuition Organization (STO) scholarship for Displaced/ Disabled (DD) the school year prior to applying



# What else to qualify?

- **OR** incoming Kindergartner (5 years old on or before September 1, 2016; not 6 years old)
  - Must also fall under one of the previous populations
- **OR** in coming Preschooler (3 or 4 years old on or before September 1, 2016)
  - child with a disability identified by an Arizona public school in a current IEP, MET or 504 plan
- 100 day rule excludes:
  - Military



# Students attending Public Online Schools

- The following are the hours (minutes) a student must meet in the public online school in order to meet the requirement for the first 100 days in the public school.
- **Deadline to meet hours is May 1, 2016**



<u>Grade Range</u>	<u>Hours Required</u>	<u>Minutes Required</u> (break down of hours)
KG	346	20,760
1-3	712	42,720
4-6	890	53,400
7-8	1068	64,080
9-12	900	54,000

# RECAP

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Requirements and Populations



# Student with a Disability

- Student and applicant parent must be residing in Arizona.

## **AND**

- Student must have attended an Arizona public or charter school for the first 100 days the school year prior to applying
- **OR** received a School Tuition Organization (STO) scholarship for Displaced/ Disabled (DD) the school year prior to applying
- **OR** incoming Kindergartner (5 years old on or before September 1, 2016; not 6 years old)
- **OR** incoming Preschooler (3 or 4 years old on or before September 1, 2016)

# Wards of the Court (Adopted)

- Student and applicant parent must be residing in Arizona.

## **AND**

- Student must have attended an Arizona public or charter school for the first 100 days the school year prior to applying
- **OR** received a School Tuition Organization (STO) scholarship for Displaced/ Disabled (DD) the school year prior to applying
- **OR** incoming Kindergartner (5 years old on or before September 1, 2016; not 6 years old)

# Wards of the Court (Adoption Plan)

- Student and applicant parent must be residing in Arizona.

## **AND**

- Student must have attended an Arizona public or charter school for the first 100 days the school year prior to applying
- **OR** received a School Tuition Organization (STO) scholarship for Displaced/ Disabled (DD) the school year prior to applying
- **OR** incoming Kindergartner (5 years old on or before September 1, 2016; not 6 years old)

# Students Attending D or F schools

- Student and applicant parent must be residing in Arizona.

## **AND**

- Student must have attended an Arizona public or charter school for the first 100 days the school year prior to applying
- **OR** incoming Kindergartner (5 years old on or before September 1, 2016; not 6 years old)
  - Must reside within the attendance boundary of a failing school.
  - Charter schools DO NOT have boundaries

# Students with Active Duty Military Parent

- Student and applicant parent must be residing in Arizona.
- Keep in mind preschoolers will not qualify unless they are a child with a disability
  - Apply using the Special Needs Application
- Excludes 100 days Rule

# Siblings

- Student and applicant parent must be residing in Arizona.

## **AND**

- Student must have attended an Arizona public or charter school for the first 100 days the school year prior to applying
- **OR** incoming Kindergartner (5 years old on or before September 1, 2016; not 6 years old)

# Residing on an Indian Reservation

- Student and applicant parent must be residing in Arizona.

## **AND**

- Student must have attended an Arizona public or charter school for the first 100 days the school year prior to applying
- **OR** incoming Kindergartner (5 years old on or before September 1, 2016; not 6 years old)

# APPLICATIONS

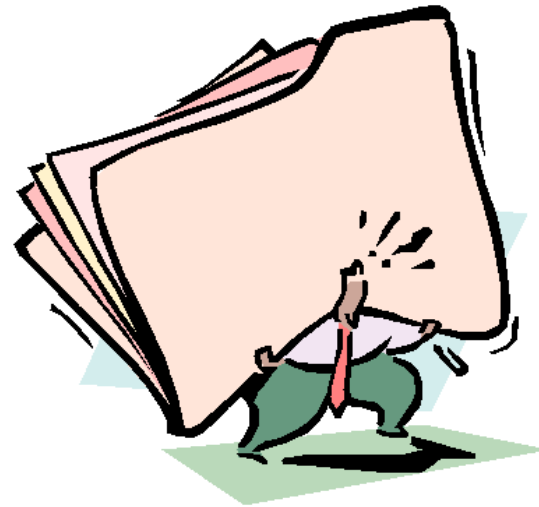
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What documents are  
needed to apply?



# Required Documents

- **Application**
- **Birth Certificate**
- **Other**--depending on the population:
  - Child with a Disability
  - Adoption/ Plan of Adoption
  - Military
  - D or F
  - Siblings
  - Reservation



# Special Needs (Student with a Disability)

- **Application**
- **Birth Certificate**
  - Must include the applicant parent name
- **Current IEP OR MET OR 504 Plan** from an Arizona public school
  - Cannot expire on or before July 15, 2016
  - Do not submit evaluations by your doctor
  - An MET (Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team) report is preferred



# STO recipient

- **Application**
- **Birth Certificate**
  - Must include the applicant parent name
- **STO Letter** that shows:
  - Name of award
  - Amount of Award
  - School awarded
  - Person of contact
- **Current IEP OR MET OR 504 Plan** from an Arizona public school
  - Cannot expire on or before July 15, 2016
  - Do not submit evaluations by your doctor
  - An MET (Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team) report is preferred



# Adoption or Plan to Adopt (students that are or were wards of the courts)

- **Application**
- **Birth Certificate**
  - Must include applicant parent name
- **Adoption Paperwork**
  - Court documents
  - Court documented minutes
  - Adoption Certificate
  - Plan to Adopt (court documented)
  - Letter from case manager or worker



# Students attending D or F Schools

- **Application**
- **Birth Certificate**
  - Applicant parent must match



# Sibling

(Student whose sibling is currently on program)

- **Application**
- **Birth Certificate**
- **Sibling Birth Certificate**
  - Applicant parent must match



# Military

(Student whose parent is an active duty member)

- **Application**
- **Birth Certificate**
  - Must include applicant parent name
- **Military Verification Form** (provided by ESA) AND current orders for the 2016-2017 fiscal year
  - Form is filled out and signed by the Commanding Officer
- **OR Letter from the active duty military serviceman/woman's commanding officer**
- **Proof of Arizona residency**
  - Approved list is located on ESA website



# Reservation

(student who resides within the boundaries of an Indian reservation)

- **Application**
- **Birth Certificate**
  - Applicant parent must match
- **Proof of Arizona Residency**





# Proof of Arizona Residency

## Approved List of Arizona Residency

Current Property deed	Current Utility bill (water, electric, gas, cable, phone)
Current Mortgage Documents	
Current Property tax bill	Current W-2 wage statement
Current Rental Agreement lease (includes Section 8 agreement)	Certificate of tribal enrollment or other identification issued by a recognized Indian tribe Other documentation from a state, tribal or federal agency



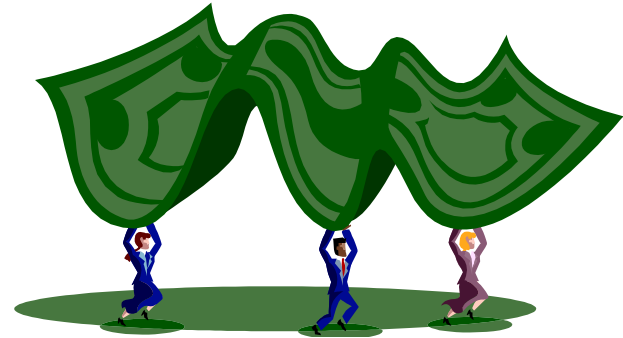
# When, where and how do I apply?

- When: January 1, 2016 through April 1, 2016
  - Late applications will not be accepted
  - **Deadline** is **April 1, 2016** at **3pm**
- Applications will be available online starting January 4, 2016
  - Paper applications will still be available on our website
  - If applying with a paper application; the application and required documents must be mailed or emailed



# If eligible, how much money is awarded?

- ESA funding is based on:
  - School District or Charter
  - Grade level
  - Disability (if applicable)
    - Primary eligibility determination
- Funds vary year to year
- Kindergarteners and Preschoolers are funded at less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  the amount a student in grades 1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> receive.

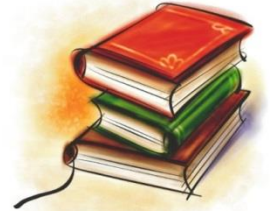


# I have submitted my application; what's next?

- A determination will be made no later than May 30, 2016.
  - Pre-approved
  - Approved
  - Denial
- Parent will receive their determination via email unless stated to receive via mail.



# How can ESA funds be spent?



- Private School Tuition OR Fees
- Textbooks required by the private school
- Fees therapies from a licensed or accredited practitioner or provider (special needs only)
- Tutoring services from an accredited provider or facility
- Licensed or accredited Paraprofessional or aide (special needs only)
- Curriculum, that must include at a minimum reading, grammar, mathematics, science, social studies
- Tuition OR fees from a private online learning program
- Fees for nationally standardized tests, college placement
- Contributions to a qualified Coverdell education savings account
- Tuition OR fees at an eligible postsecondary institution
- Textbooks required by the postsecondary institution
- Account fees administered by Bank of America
- Services provided by a public school (schools are under no obligation to provide services, classes, sports, extra curricula activities, etc.)

# What is disallowed?

- **Computer Hardware AND Technological Devices**
  - iPads, iPods, flash drives, computer, laptops, printers, monitors, calculators, etc.
- **Consumable Supplies**
  - Pens, pencils, paper, notebooks, Microsoft software, folders, clothes, food, backpack, batteries, etc.
- **Transportation**
- **Sports Equipment**
  - Includes Uniforms
- **Musical Instruments**
  - Rental or purchase
  - No uniforms
- **Parks and Recreation**
- **Before and After Care**
- **Summer Camps**
  - Non-educational
- **Medical Services**
  - Eye exams, chiropractor, psychiatrist, medical evaluations/ exams, acupuncture, etc.
- **Medical Insurance**
  - Copays and other medical insurance cannot be combined



# What will need to be submitted to ESA?

- **4 page contract**
- **Bank Agreement Form**
- **Notice of Pupil Withdrawal** from the public or charter school
- **Confirmation Form** that the Handbook has been read and understood
- **Deadline** to submit all of the above is **June 20, 2016**
- ***IF ANY OF THE ABOVE IS MISSING YOU WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE AN ESA***



# When and How do I receive funds?

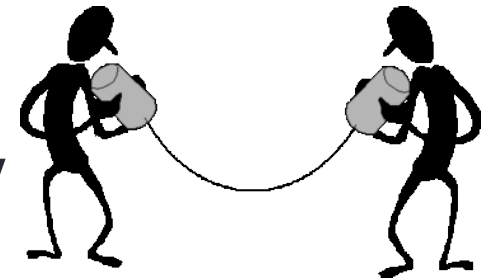
- Bank of America Prepaid Cards will be mailed July 15 through July 30, 2016
  - Cards may arrive with or without ESA funds
  - Cards will be funded no later than July 30, 2016
- Quarterly Disbursements—plan ahead!
  - July 15 through July 30
  - October 15 through October 30
  - January 15 through January 30
  - April 15 through April 30
    - **NO** CASH WITHDRAWALS, CASH ADVANCES or CASHIER CHECKS are allowed!!
    - *If a parent is caught making a withdrawal on their account; he or she may be terminated from the ESA program indefinitely!*





# Required of the parent if approved

- **No public school enrollment**
  - Includes Charter schools and Online schools
  - Summer programs offered at any public school
    - Charter
    - Traditional
    - Online
- **Cannot accept an STO**
  - Includes any tax credit
- **Expense Reports are required quarterly**
  - Save all receipts or invoices
- **Maintain communication with your Program Specialist**
  - You'll be surprised how much they work with you if you communicate 😊



# CONTACT INFORMATION

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Email: [esa@azed.gov](mailto:esa@azed.gov)

ESA Main Line: 602-364-1969

# THANK YOU!

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